

important and instructive to analyse a question of this sort, on which our own judgment is at issue with common report.

Henry (prior of Abercromby) was consecrated bishop of Landaff in 1191, and died in 1218. He was a person of much consideration and energy, and appears to have made great changes in the temporalities of the chapter. He may, with at least as much probability as belongs to some antiquarian assertions, be supposed, if not actually to have recommenced the erection of his cathedral in the new style of his day, at least to have promoted works, the character and period of which are so evidently coeval with his twenty-seven years of power.*

The lower portions of the north tower, and all the remaining part of the south tower, the nave, and clerestory remaining, are all of the same pure "Early English" character. In the columns and arches of the nave and choir a slight variety of arrangement occurs without deviating from the style: somewhat more ornament is introduced, and by the time they reached the "Ladye Chapel" the gradation of style becomes apparent; and with a view to give increased richness to this more sacred portion of the building, or from the more "decorated" fashion of the day, when they arrived thus far east, vaulting is introduced, mullions and circles are executed in the side windows, and in the easternmost window tracery becomes apparent until it almost assumes the character of a "decorated" window.†

In the two bays of the presbytery a fault (as geologists might term it) occurs, which it is difficult to account for. These arches are evidently of a later and more depressed form than those in the nave and choir, and from their form and detail are of a later date than the Ladye Chapel. Whether this portion of Urban's work may have remained uninjured and undisturbed until after the completion of the Ladye Chapel, when they may have thought it necessary to assimilate the Norman piers and arches more closely to their pointed neighbours, or whether some injury took place to this part of the cathedral, which rendered rebuilding necessary at a later period, I have no means of determining, but it is curious that in this portion of the building we find more Norman remains than elsewhere. There still exists the Norman string course in its original bed, with a sort of "embattled fret" carved upon it, running round the three sides of the presbytery: we find plinths and portions of cylindrical shafts, which may have formed (as at Norwich) the arch between the choir and presbytery: there is the large Norman arch over the screen; the curious remains of a Norman window, so unceremoniously blocked up by the Early English architect who built against it; and in the rough masonry of the walls of this part we find walled-up numerous fragments of Norman mouldings and ornaments. One might almost suppose this portion of Urban's original cathedral to have escaped the early destruction I attribute to the rest of his building, and to have been preserved intact by the Early English architects who rebuilt. At some later period, for fashion's sake, or from decay, we can imagine these arches to have been reconstructed or remodelled, leaving, as I believe they did, the Norman clerestory undisturbed. The string course even now remains; and in the view given of the north front by Godwin, in 1713 (when it was almost perfect), it will be observed that a semicircular and apparently Norman line of windows is shown in the clerestory of this part, as distinguished from the Early English in the nave. Of the history of this alteration or portion of the work, I can find no trace.

The "decorated" altar-screen is stated, in Browne Willis's and all the other histories of the cathedral, to have been erected by a Bishop Marshall, who was consecrated in 1478; but as the detail is pure "decorated," it must have been completed, in all probability, 100 years before this time. I have little doubt but that the piers and arches of the presbytery and

this screen were erected at the same time, or by the same architect—an opinion which is confirmed by the fact of the base moulding on the south side being raised considerably above the opposite pier on the north side, and corresponding exactly with the level of the base of screen and the base of the sedile which it immediately adjoins. The decoration and enrichment of this screen, attributed to Bishop Marshall, have, no doubt, reference to the painting and gilding upon it. "There are eleven niches in the principal level, painted with roses and hyacinths interchangeably." The centres of the roses and flowers of the hyacinths are gilt. The roses are white (which quite identifies the decoration with Bishop Marshall),—the white rose being the device of the house of York, used for decoration only in the reign of Edward IV. and Richard III. Bishop Marshall having been preferred to this diocese by Edward IV., the adoption of his badge was a natural and proper compliment. "Under these eleven niches is a row of eight niches, painted in fresco, exactly like the former. At each end of these are three real niches painted in the same manner: within these are two little ones, with a pilaster between; the ground-work throughout is interchangeably blue and red, and the ornaments over all the niches are gilt. At each end is a door leading into a vestry." Thus far I can confirm, from the remains of this screen, the description given by Browne Willis. He then proceeds to say—"Above the altar-piece are two rows of large niches, in which formerly there have been figures. In both rows the middlemost niche is larger than the rest; and on each side are two lesser ones. The two largest niches probably contained the images of our Lord and the blessed Virgin, and the other twelve were for the twelve Apostles. Under the two large niches are the ten commandments, written with gold letters, within a frame, and over all is a handsome freestone window." Unfortunately, the destruction of this upper portion of the screen has been complete (doubtless the work of puritan or political fanaticism). Nothing remains above this line, but we have found walled into the various portions of the Italian structure fragments of corbels, canopies, and buttresses, which evidently, from their size and form of moulding, belonged to this screen.

From the period when Godwin described Urban's Church to have been complete, of certain dimensions, "and work truly magnificent," there is no notice of the cathedral until 1719, when Browne Willis, an antiquary of that day (who also published histories of St. David's, St. Asaph, Bangor, and Hereford cathedrals), moved, as he says, "out of a sad contemplation lest so glorious a structure as this church, honoured as the ancientest bishop's see in the kingdom, raised, enriched, and beautified by the piety of so many noble founders, should be utterly destroyed and become a woful spectacle of ruin; and further excited by the spur of a projected design to remove the see hence to Cardiff; he collected together various records and matter, and gave with his work certain draughts of the said church, in order to illustrate the descriptions thereof." These draughts, as you may imagine, are not very clear in their distinctions of style, or in the best possible perspective, but they are most valuable as helping the description, as being the only records we have of what the old cathedral was (before lightning, storms, and Wood of Bath played such havoc with it); and, consequently, as being our principal guide and authority in the restoration.

I will not detain you by a detailed account of its state in 1719. Browne Willis goes into a minute description of it, and gives a plan, with references to the various parts and monuments, and a south and a western elevation. It was then falling into a state "of deplorable decay," though perfect in its internal arrangements. There was a large building in front of the south Norman doorway, which he calls the "Consistory Court;" and a porch opposite the "decorated" south door. Both these erections have disappeared, and I should much doubt if they formed any portion of the original design.

Soon after his survey, destruction had full sway. On the 20th of November of the fol-

lowing year, the remaining battlements and pinnacles of the north tower (which had escaped the storm of 1703) were blown down, and destroyed a considerable portion of the north aisle. On the 6th February, 1722, the "roof and floor of the south tower fell in, and destroyed a good deal of the tower." The complete ruin of this old structure must have followed very rapidly on Willis's visit; and in 1721 we find the Archbishop of Canterbury interesting himself in its proposed rebuilding (I cannot say restoration). He obtained 1,000*l.* from George I., and, like our bishop of the present day, tried in vain to get anything from the Prince of Wales. Sufficient funds were, however, eventually raised to erect the frightful shell which now encases the original piers and arches.

About 1735, Wood of Bath, commenced the desecration of this fine old work, and of his own prior fame: for most assuredly a more barbarous or tasteless grafting of uncongenial modernism upon an ancient stem was never perpetrated; and never was the sarcasm of the historian Whitaker more justly deserved than in this instance. He says—"The cloven foot will appear! for modern architects have an incurable propensity to mix their own absurd and unauthorized fancies with the genuine models of antiquity: They want alike taste to invent, or modesty to copy." All that can be said in extenuation is that the corrupt taste of that day gave a fashion to this work, the power of which Wood may have been unable to resist; I wish it was in evidence that he had tried to do so. That this fashion approved such barbarism may be inferred from the accompanying letter, which I find copied in the Cole's MSS. in the British Museum. It is written by a Rev. Thos. Davies to Browne Willis, who appears still to have taken much interest in the old wreck.

"23rd Nov. 1736.—The church on the inside, as far as its tiled and plastered, which is something beyond the west end of choir, looks exceeding fine, and is a very stately and beautiful room. The area of the whole church is to be considerably raised, so that when finished it will (in the judgment of most people who have seen it), be a very neat and elegant church, unless, indeed, the altar-piece, which looks like a huge portico, spoil the whole effect."

Mr. Coles illustrates his amusing MS. by elevations of the west and south fronts, and a view of the altar portico, which it was feared (and not without some reason) might mar the whole effect.

We find no traces of the portico at the west end, nor can I learn that the pigeon-house cupola was ever carried into effect. The altar was removed some few years ago.

The bishop's throne, the pulpit, and stalls consist of an Ionic colonnade, with niches at the back; they still exist in their pristine propriety and beauty, and I can conscientiously recommend them to any architect about to build assize courts; the pulpit and throne would form admirable judge's seats, and the stalls a most dignified row of seats for the magistracy.

I do not imagine that much was done to Mr. Wood's structure until 1840, when the plaster ceiling and lead over the nave being in a very bad and unweather-tight condition, a considerable sum was expended in repairing and making good as it then existed.

So much for the history of the cathedral. A very few words will describe its condition when the present restorations were commenced.†

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* Considering the wars and tumults that devastated this county under the Norman barons, the Llewellyns, the Glendowers, the Owen Tudors, and the Puritans, it is not surprising that history is wanting. "The castellated palace of the bishop the ruins of which are very extensive, was destroyed by Owen Glendower in the same rebellion by which the cathedral suffered." Hen. IV. There was a library belonging to the cathedral before the civil wars, but it was dispersed by the fanatic and ignorant rebels: part of it, and great heaps of Common Prayer Books, were burnt at Cardiff in a manner extending the most wanton malignity. To add brutal insult to despoliate fury, the Cavaliers of the country and the wives of several sequestered clergymen were invited to the castle to warm themselves in a cold winter's day at the fire made of the books which were then burnt. It is not, therefore, strange that the effects of such unparalleled depredations should still remain, and that scarcely anything but the name of a cathedral now appears at Landaff.

† Next week.

* "He founded twelve prebends in his church, and was buried near the altar."

† There is good reason to believe that the present Ladye Chapel was the addition of "William de Brooc," the 43rd bishop, from 1265 to 1287. He was buried close to the altar, and his tomb still remains.